There being no additional nominations to those proposed by the Committee the following elections were made:

Sir Hugh Elliott, Bt., as Chairman *vice* Dr. Monk who retired.

Mr. J. H. Elgood as Vice-Chairman *vice* Sir Hugh Elliott.

Mr. J. K. Adams to the Committee *vice* Mr. P. L. Wayre who retired by rotation.

Mr. C. J. Mead to the Committee *vice* Mr. P. F. R. Jackson who resigned.

Dr. P. J. K. Burton to the Committee *vice* Mr. Peal who accepted nomination as Hon. Secretary.

Mr. R. E. F. Peal as Hon. Secretary *vice* Mr. D. R. Calder who declined re-election.

Mr. P. Tate as Hon. Treasurer.

The meeting also approved the re-appointment of Messrs. Norton Keen & Co. as auditors to the Club.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.40 p.m.

Two vagrants to Ascension Island

by Storrs L. Olson

Received 30th March, 1971

On a collecting expedition for the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. I spent the period from 12th June to 15th July 1970, on Ascension Island, South Atlantic Ocean. As the island is remote and seldom visited by biologists, it seems worthwhile to report the presence of the following two vagrants.

Porphyrula alleni—Shortly after my arrival on Ascension, Mr. Allan Mills described to me a strange bird that had been captured and released a few days previously. From his description I judged it to be an immature purple gallinule (*Porphyrula* sp.) and I later learned that the bird had been photographed. Mr. Harry Brewster kindly put this photograph at my disposal and related the following story about the bird. It had been found on 10th June 1970 near English Bay, in an apparently exhausted condition. It could not fly but ran fairly well and was captured by workmen who kept it in a box overnight. The next day it was photographed and released near Georgetown and was not seen again. It very likely became a victim of the island's many feral housecats. Although the photograph is not too sharp, the bird can definitely be distinguished as an immature *Porphyrula*. Fortunately, the wing was extended and the primaries can be discerned. The third primary (from the outside) is the longest, a characteristic of *P. alleni*. In *P. martinica* the second primary is the longest. Apparently the only other record of *P. alleni* from Ascension is one taken 27th May 1920 (Lowe 1924). Through the kindness of Dr. David Snow at the British Museum (Natural History), I have been able to re-examine this latter specimen and can confirm its identity. Stonehouse (1960, 1962) mentions the capture of a juvenile Common Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus*) in an exhausted condition at Mars Bay in early June 1958. In the 1960 account (p. 153) he reports that a farmhand, a long-time resident of Ascension, "had seen others like it in previous years". These observations may well pertain to both *Gallinula* and *Porphyrula*. The African species, *Porphyrula alleni*, is the one to be expected on Ascension in view of the strong southeast trade winds which blow across the island.

Gallinules are notorious trans-Atlantic wanderers. There are a number of records of *P. alleni* from St. Helena (Kinnear 1943; Loveridge 1964). *P.*

martinica turns up regularly at Tristan da Cunha (Rand 1955, and others) and even on the African continent (Winterbottom 1965; Middlemiss 1965). Bannerman & Bannerman (1966) record both species of *Porphyrula* from the Azores, a circumstance that requires further confirmation. Despite the ability of members of this genus to reach the small isolated islands of the Atlantic, they seem never to have established breeding populations on any of them. On the other hand, *Gallinula chloropus* and its derivatives have successfully colonised many oceanic islands throughout the world. *G. c. meridionalis* (I have confirmed the identity of the specimen mentioned by Kinnear, *op. cit.*) is a well established breeding bird on St. Helena (Loveridge, pers. comm., who also informs me that in his 1964 article, the reference to G. *angulata* was an error for *G. chloropus*). On Tristan da Cunha and Gough Islands, the flightless populations referred to as *Gallinula* (*Porphyriornis* auct.) *nesiotis* are obviously derived from *G. chloropus* stock. I suggest that the apparent inability of *Porphyrula* to colonise small islands is due to its much more specialised structure and habits. There are some rather striking morphological adaptations in this genus that are correlated with its specialised existence in a habitat of floating vegetation. *Gallinula*, in spite of its aquatic tendencies, is a generalised, more typically ralline genus which is much better suited to take advantage of new insular environments.,

Arenaria interpres—I first observed a Turnstone along the shore at Clark's Beach late in the afternoon of 15th June 1970. What I presumed to be the same individual was present on 16th, 18th and 19th June at the same place. On 1st July Mr. Dave Gallop and I toured all the beaches of the island looking for the Turnstone and any other shorebirds that might be around, but met with no success. The bird was back in its customary place at Clark's Beach on the mornings of 10th through 13th July. I made several attempts to collect the bird but it could fly well and would not allow of close approach. It seemed to be in neither bright breeding plumage nor juvenile plumage and was always seen foraging in the sand at the water's edge, not among the rocks. Stonehouse (1960: 185) writes that during the B.O.U. Ascension Expedition (October 1957 to May 1959) "Turnstones could occasionally be found among the rock pools by Georgetown, and . . . on the beach of Mars Bay"., but gives no dates. Dr. N. P. Ashmole, who was a member of the expedition ,writes me that his only satisfactory record of a Turnstone was on 23rd January 1959. Packer (1968) lists two Turnstones seen near Georgetown in November 1962. Although the species migrates to the southern parts of Africa and South America and has been recorded from nearly all the islands of the Atlantic, I know of no records from St. Helena or the Tristan group, which seems odd. Summering of boreal-nesting shorebirds, such as Turnstones, in areas well south of their breeding grounds, is a well-known phenomenon. Max Thompson (in MS) has found that the preponderance of summering shorebirds in the Pacific are first year birds. What is of interest about my record, aside from its apparently being the only summer record from Ascension, is that it represents what was certainly a single individual known to have remained in a southern summering locality for at least a month (cf. Loftin 1962).

I would like to thank the Smithsonian Institution and the U.S. Air Force for making my trip to Ascension possible, as well as the many British and American personnel who aided me so much while on the island. Dr. George E. Watson has been of invaluable assistance in making arrangements for my research and commented on a draft of this note.

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A wild shot Pintail × Mallard hybrid

by M. A. Macdonald & J. E. Newby

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On 16th December 1970 A. MacAuslane shot a strange duck from a flight of Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos* Linnaeus), at Newmachar, Aberdeenshire, Scotland. It was a typical male hybrid, broadly intermediate in plumage and build between a Mallard and a Pintail (*Anas acuta* Linnaeus). It was compared with skins at the Zoology Department, University of Aberdeen, where it is now preserved as a study skin (no. 1971.1.2). A detailed description was taken and follows below. P denotes a Pintail character; M a Mallard one; and PM a Pintail character modified in the direction of Mallard.

Size and shape: The long neck and narrow pointed wings were like those of Pintail (P), but in size it approached Mallard (M).

Head: Forehead and crown feathers glossy green (M), broadly tipped chocolate brown (P); nape glossy green at sides to black in centre (M); cheeks and throat dull dark green (M); white collar on front and sides of neck broader than in Mallard (MP), and produced up side of neck in an indistinct white line (P); no trace of bimaculation, a characteristic often found in hybrids involving Pintail and Mallard (Harrison & Harrison 1971).

Bill: In shape and colour like Pintail; main colour slate grey; nail, base and margin of upper mandible, and band along ridge of culmen, black; lower mandible black with a narrow grey subterminal band (P).

Breast: Upper breast pale chestnut with creamy tips (MP); lower white (P); sides strongly vermiculated grey and black.

Belly: Finely vermiculated grey and black, stronger on flanks (M).

Under tail coverts: Glossy black, bounded anteriorly by a broad white band (M).

Tail: 18 feathers (M); outer seven pairs grey with mottled creamy edges, decreasing in width inwards; eighth darker with a very thin creamy outer margin; centre pair glossy black, long and pointed (P), and slightly upcurved (M).

Upper tail coverts: Dark brown with pale edgings.

Rump: Olive brown with paler edges.